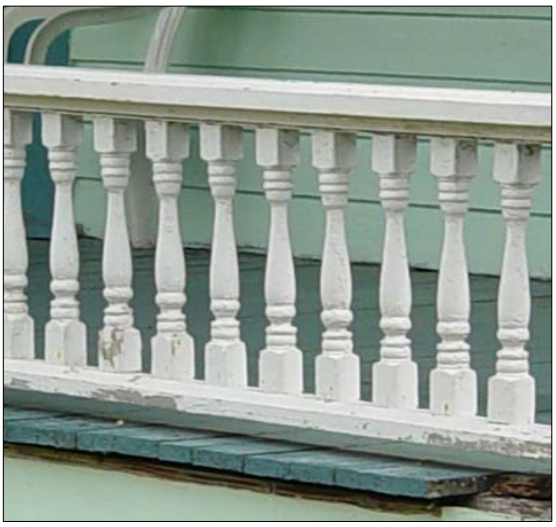
3.10 Architectural Details

Architectural detailing on the Municipal building.



Turned balusters on residential porch

Historic structures are often defined by their architectural detailing and ornamentation. On residential structures, eaves, brackets, columns, balusters, door & window casings, and other details such as molding, trim and clapboards all contribute significantly to the historic character of the building. Commercial buildings have cornices, friezes, columns, brick corbelling, string courses, quoins, columns, pilasters and other features that also enhance the architectural character of this building type.

Architectural Details Guidelines

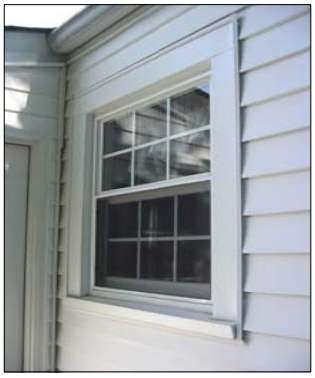
3.10.1 Original architectural components and details shall be retained whenever possible.

3.10.2 When architectural components and details must be replaced, the new components or details shall match the historic elements as closely as possible in style, proportion, and material.

3.10.3 Architectural components and details that are not appropriate to the historic character of the structure shall not be added. New features should not be added unless there is physical or other evidence that they historically existed.

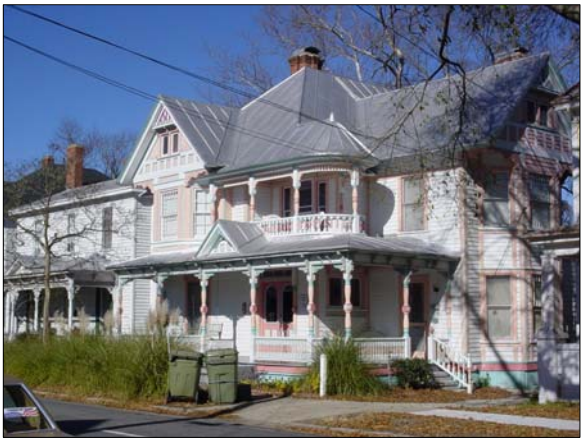
3.10.4 Historic architectural components shall not be replaced with materials, such as plywood, vinyl, and aluminum that would not have been used in the original construction.

3.10.5 Architectural details shall not be covered or obscured by artificial siding.



Vinyl siding often obscures detailing such as the relationship of this window surround to the wall.

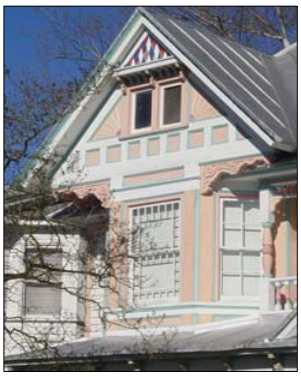
3.11 Paint



The Historic Preservation Commission in Washington **does not review** paint or paint color. Therefore, a property owner within the historic district does not need to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to painting his or her building. The guidelines for paint presented in this document are included only as a guide to the proper methods to apply and maintain paint on a historic structure.

Paint serves two primary purposes on a historic structure: to provide character and detail to the building, and to preserve and protect wood and some metal surfaces. Masonry surfaces were historically left unpainted while some metal surfaces such as copper or bronze were left uncoated as well.

Paint color and its application are non permanent changes to a structure that often reflect personal taste. It also provides a level of visual detail on a structure much to the same degree as an architectural component like a cornice or porch. The body of a building is typically painted a lighter color than the trim and other detailing, thus accentuating the architectural detail of the structure. On a Victorian structure for instance, paint schemes often include a number of different colors that are intended to highlight the intricate woodwork and detail of the building.



Victorian paint schemes are often highly detailed.

Paint Guidelines

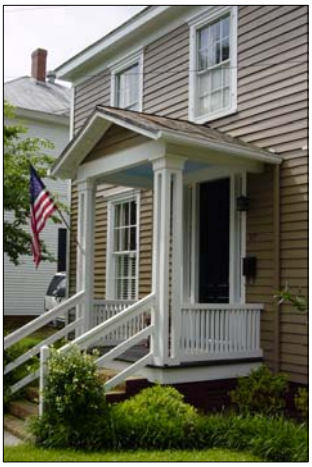
3.11.1 Using high-quality paint, apply a sound paint film to surfaces that were historically painted.

3.11.2 Follow preparation and application guidelines in previous sections on wood, metal, and masonry materials.

3.11.3 Select paint schemes that are most appropriate to the architectural style and period of the historic structure. The Planning office can provide property owners with historic color palettes.

3.11.4 Painting architectural features such as trim, brackets, corner boards and moldings a different color than the body of the structure will accentuate these architectural details.

*Refer to Standards for Rehabilitation.



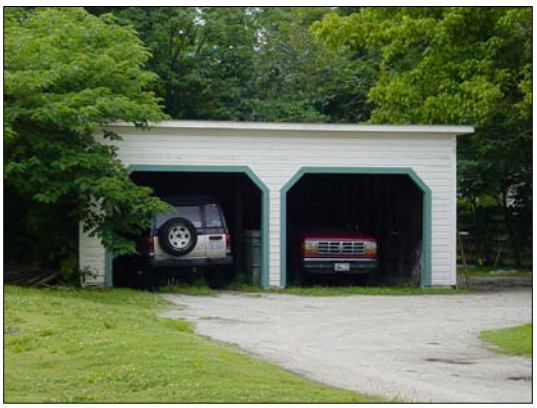
Variation in paint color can accentuate architectural details.

3.11.5 When applying paint to a historic building, care must be given not to conceal any architectural details or texture of the underlying material.

3.11.6 "Liquid vinyl" treatments are prohibited on historic structures.

3.11.7 Masonry surfaces were historically unpainted. Paint previously painted masonry material in colors that reflect the underlying material.

3.12 Outbuildings and Accessory Structures



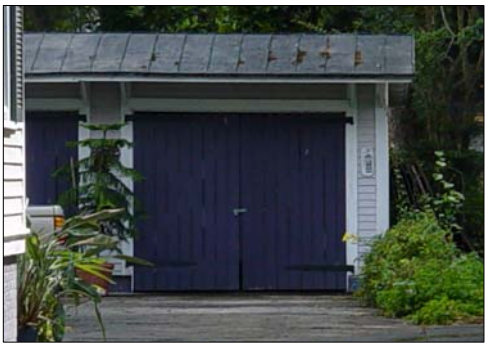
Original outbuildings such as barns, sheds, and garages, have often gained historic significance in their own right due to their construction method, architectural style, and period. In fact, many of these structures still survive in the district and are still being used as they were originally intended. Many of these historic outbuildings have architectural characteristics and style similar to the primary structure with which they are associated. They are more utilitarian in nature, and are usually situated in rear yards adjacent to alleyways.

Outbuildings and Accessory Structures Guidelines

3.12.1 The same ctiteria related to the use of materials for new construction apply to outbuildings and accessory structures. See Section 5.0.

3.12.2 Retain and preserve original outbuildings which have gained historic significance on their own.

3.12.3 Architectural elements of historic outbuildings such as roofs, siding, material, windows and doors, foundations, and character-defining detailing should be retained and preserved.



3.12.4 If replacement of an element on a historic outbuilding is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion to match the original in material, size, proportion, texture and detailing.

3.12.5 Designs for new outbuildings and accessory structures should complement the architectural style and period of the primary structures as well as examples of similar structure within the district.

3.12.6 New outbuildings should be located in rear yards if possible.

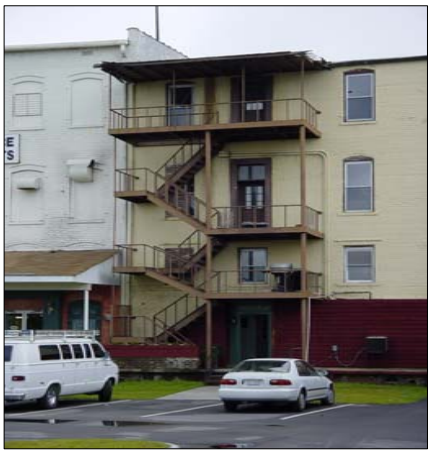
3.12.7 New outbuildings should be proportionally the same in size and height to the primary structure as is seen in the relationship between other primary and secondary structures in the district.

3.12.8 Prefabricated wooden accessory structures that are not architecturally similar to the primary structure are allowed only if screened from view from any existing right-of-way. Prefabricated metal storage buildings are not acceptable.

3.13 Safety and Accessibility

Due to the fact that historic structures were constructed before life safety and accessibility codes were developed, they normally don't meet modern safety and accessibility standards as required by local building and fire codes. Some renovations to historic structures can trigger these codes and therefore, facilities for safety and accessibility must be incorporated into the project. North Carolina State Building Code and federal requirements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act provide certain flexibility concerning historic structures. Contact the Building Inspector's office at 252.975.9304 for complete details regarding these matters.

While these building codes often result in substantial changes to a historic property, the installation of accessibility and life safety features can usually be done in a manner that does not compromise the historic character of the structure.



Fire escape and access accommodated on rear elevation.

structure. If feasible, new doors for fire escapes should be located in existing openings.

Safety and Accessibilty Guidelines

3.13.1 When projects must include the addition of health and safety features, use whatever means possible to minimize visual impact, and protect the historic character of the structure, and its character-defining details.

3.13.2 Health and safety features including fire escapes and access ramps shall be designed so there is minimal visual impact to the historic structure. If possible, they should be located on rear elevations where they are not visible from the public right-of-way.

3.13.3 Health and safety features that are visible from the public right-of-way shall be constructed so that the scale, materials, and details are compatible with the historic structure

3.13.4 Fire escapes and access ramps shall be constructed in such a way that they can be removed with minimum damage to the historic

3.14 Mechanical and Communication Systems

Installation, rehabilitation, or replacement of mechanical systems should be planned to minimize changes to the appearance of a structure. Building systems include mechanical and electrical equipment, distributions lines; plumbing pipes and vents; and communication systems, such as telephone and television. Conformance with local building codes and utility company standards and practices is required for the installation, upgrading, or replacement of building systems.

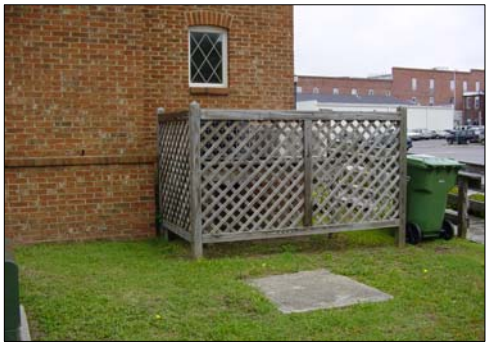
Communication systems such as television antennae, satellite dishes, and cellular phone towers can dramatically affect the character of the historic environment. Care must be given so that the installation of these systems minimize their visual and physical impact to the historic district.

Mechanical and Communication Systems Guidelines

3.14.1 Some historic mechanical systems such as plumbing, early lighting fixtures, and vents are important architectural features and should be retained and preserved whenever possible.

3.14.2 New mechanical systems shall be installed in areas and spaces that will require the least possible alteration to the plan, materials, and appearance of a building.

3.14.3 Mechanical systems including utility meters and heating and air-conditioning equipment shall be located at the rear of a structure if feasible. Mechanical equipment which can be seen from the street must be screened with shrubbery or appropriate fencing.

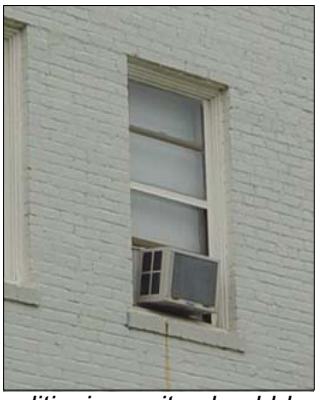


Mechanical systems should be screened from view.

3.14.4 Mechanical systems on historic commercial structures shall be screened from public view on rear elevations or behind parapet walls on the roof.

3.14.5 Install new air-conditioning units so that excessive moisture does not accumulate and increase the chance of deterioration of historic materials.

3.14.6 When installing window air-conditioning units, place them in windows on the rear elevations not easily seen from a public right-of-way. Install them in such a manner that there is no damage to the existing window sill and sashes.



Window air-conditioning units should be located on rear elevations.

3.14.7 If feasible, mechanical supply lines and ductwork shall be located inside buildings. Exterior mechanical supply lines and ductwork shall be disguised by architectural elements compatible with the character of the building and shall be located as inconspicuously as possible.

3.14.8 Plumbing vents and solar collectors can not be visible from the street.

3.14.9 Attaching exterior electrical, telephone, television, etc. cables to the principal elevations of the buildings is not permitted.

3.14.10 Locate television antennas and satellite dishes on rear elevations where they are not easily seen from a public right-of-way.

3.14.11 Stealth techniques for the installation of cellular phone systems shall be used whenever possible. Locating cellular units on roofs in the commercial district, in church steeples, or on existing communication towers is preferable to the construction of a new tower.